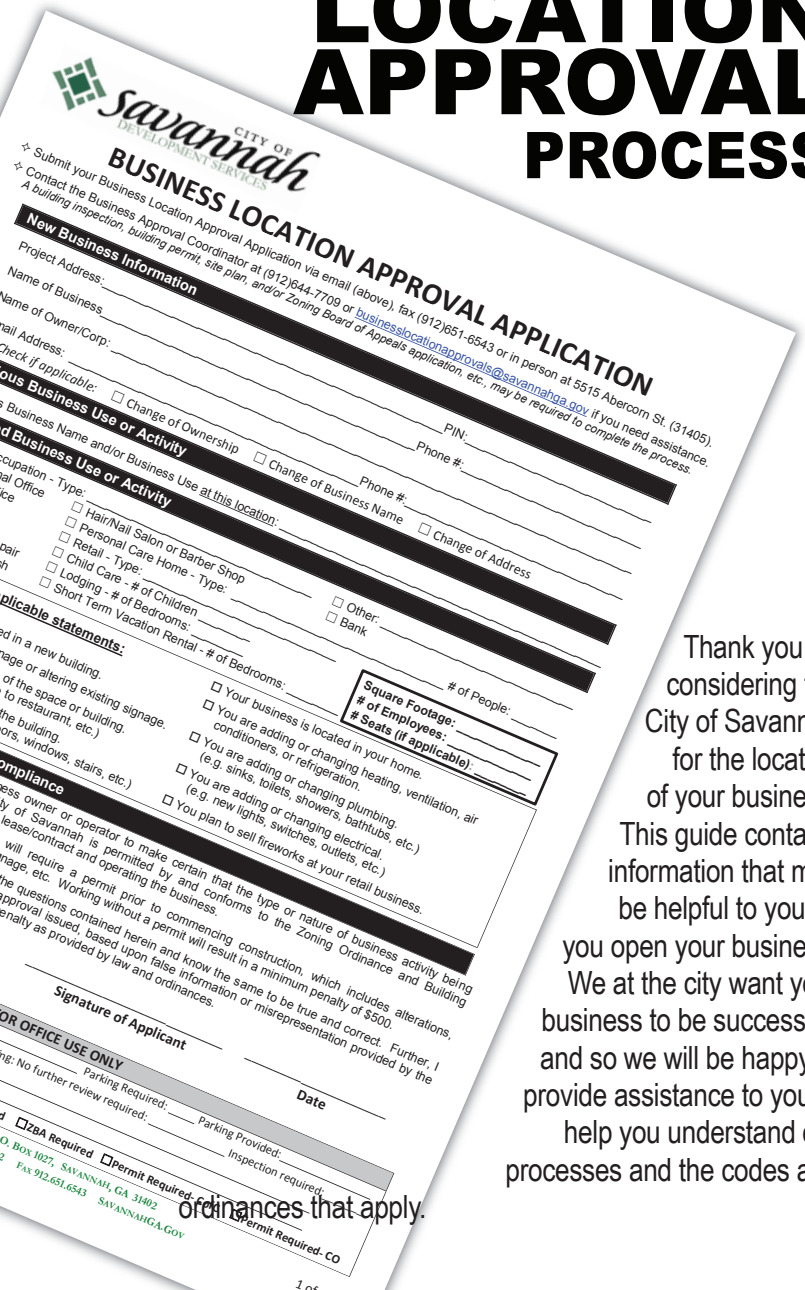




CITY OF
Savannah
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

BUSINESS LOCATION APPROVAL PROCESS



BUSINESS LOCATION APPROVAL APPLICATION

Submit your Business Location Approval Application via email (above), fax (912)651-6543 or in person at 5515 Abercorn St. (31405).
Contact the Business Approval Coordinator at (912)644-7709 or businesslocationapprovals@savannahga.gov if you need assistance.
A building inspection, building permit, site plan, and/or Zoning Board of Appeals application, etc., may be required to complete the process.

New Business Information

Project Address: _____
Name of Business: _____
Name of Owner/Corp: _____
Phone #: _____
PIN: _____
Check if applicable: Change of Ownership Change of Business Name Change of Address

Business Use or Activity

Business Name and/or Business Use at this location: _____
Phone #: _____
Occupation - Type: _____
Retail - Type: _____
Child Care - # of Children: _____
Lodging - # of Bedrooms: _____
Short Term Vacation Rental - # of Bedrooms: _____
Other: _____
Bank: _____

Applicable statements:

I am occupying or relocating to a building or space that was previously legally occupied by the same type business as yours, there are generally no changes required to the building or site unless the building was damaged or altered without permits. There may be some exceptions to that rule when there is a serious or life safety code violation or when certain maintenance needs to be performed, such as updates to electrical, mechanical, plumbing, or life safety systems.

Your business is located in your home, conditions, or refrigeration.
 You are adding or changing plumbing (e.g. sinks, toilets, showers, bathtubs, etc.)
 You are adding or changing electrical (e.g. new lights, switches, outlets, etc.)
 You plan to sell fireworks at your retail business.

Signature of Applicant _____
Date _____

PERMITTING OFFICE USE ONLY

Permit Required: _____
Inspection Required: _____

1 of 1

Thank you for considering the City of Savannah for the location of your business. This guide contains information that may be helpful to you as you open your business. We at the city want your business to be successful, and so we will be happy to provide assistance to you to help you understand our processes and the codes and ordinances that apply.

Step 1

Apply for your Business Location Approval

Business Location Approval is required for all businesses that are located within City limits. The Business Location Approval process is an opportunity to confirm that your proposed use is permitted in the property's zoning district and that the structure meets applicable building and fire code requirements.

Most Business Location Approval applications follow one of the following tracks:

• TRACK A

Change of tenant with same business use

If you are occupying or relocating to a building or space that was previously legally occupied by the same type business as yours, there are generally no changes required to the building or site unless the building was damaged or altered without permits. There may be some exceptions to that rule when there is a serious or life safety code violation or when certain maintenance needs to be performed, such as updates to electrical, mechanical, plumbing, or life safety systems.

• TRACK B

Change of business use OR new construction

Change of use (such as house to office, office to restaurant, etc.) always requires compliance with current building, fire, life safety, and zoning codes, which in turn usually requires changes to the building and site. These changes will require a building permit and/or a site development permit. Contact the Business Approval Coordinator for direction.

If your Business Location Approval application follows **TRACK B**, a change of use, some typical building and site requirements that may apply include:

BUILDING REQUIREMENTS

- Handicap access/accessible facilities
- Additional restrooms
- Exit lights and emergency lighting
- Fire alarms and suppression systems
- Floor plans and seating layouts
- Electrical changes and estimate of electrical service size
- Grease trap (restaurants)

Note: An architect may be required to design the required changes.

SITE REQUIREMENTS

- Additional parking
- Handicap parking and signage
- Parking lot improvements
- Widening driveway/access
- Stormwater/drainage improvements
- Additional landscaping/buffer requirements

Note: A civil engineer may be required to design the required changes.

Business Location Approval applications may be obtained:

- online at www.savannahga.gov/businessapprovals
- from the Business Approval Coordinator, tel: 912-644-7709
- from the Development Services office, 5515 Abercorn Street, open Monday through Friday 8:15 am to 5:00 pm

Please submit your Business Location Approval application via email to businessapprovals@savannahga.gov, by FAX to (912) 651-6453 or in person to the Development Services office. The Business Approval Coordinator will coordinate with Zoning and Building Inspections if necessary during the review process. The Business Approval Coordinator may contact you with questions regarding your application and to schedule necessary inspections.

Typical timeframe to obtain a Business Location Approval

Home Occupation	2 to 4 business days
Same Business Use	3 to 5 business days
Change of Business Use*	5 to 7 business days

**Note: If a building permit is required, it may take an additional 30 days to obtain the permit. If a site development permit is required, it may take an additional 60 days to obtain the permit.*

Step 2



Additional permits, licenses & approvals your business may require

Business Tax Certificate

All businesses operating in the City of Savannah are required to have a business tax certificate in lieu of a business license. After receiving your Business Approval, submit a New Business Tax Return Form to the Revenue Department, along with payment and any other required documents, to receive a Business Tax Certificate. Contact the Revenue Department at (912) 651-6445.

Alcoholic Beverage License

If you plan to apply for a City of Savannah Alcoholic Beverage License, contact the Revenue Department at (912) 651-6447. Please allow at least six to eight weeks for this process.

Backflow Preventer for Existing Building

If work requiring a building permit will be performed on an existing building, the backflow preventer on the water line to the building may need to be upgraded or replaced. An inspection will be performed by City staff to determine if this is required.

Water & Sewer Fees

The City of Savannah requires payment of water and sewer fees based on water usage of the business. This requirement often impacts restaurants and beauty salons. Contact Water and Sewer Planning and Engineering at (912) 651-6573.

Chatham County Health Department Permits

Any business performing the following operations will require permitting from the Chatham County Health Department: food service establishments, body art facilities, tourist accommodations (including, but not limited to hotels, motels, bed & breakfast, etc.), and public swimming pools/spas/recreational water parks. Contact the Health Department at (912)356-2160. If you will be selling pre-packaged goods, whole sale meats, or produce, contact the Georgia Department of Agriculture at (800)282-5852.

Signage

All new signs associated with your business requires a sign permit. The Business Approval Coordinator will assist you in determining the sign standards applicable to your business site, building, and/or suite, and with the sign permit application process.

Petitions for Encroachment

If any items, such as signs or awnings, will remain within the City right-of-way, the encroachment must be approved through formal petition. Approval takes approximately eight to ten weeks. For additional information contact (912) 651-6524.

Lawn Care/Pressure Washing/Car Wash Businesses

It is prohibited to discharge substances or materials which are not stormwater into the City's stormwater system. Contact the Stormwater Management Department at (912) 650-7855 for information on how lawn care, pressure washing and car wash businesses can comply with the City's Stormwater Ordinance.

Historic Preservation Office

For any exterior modifications made on projects located in certain historic districts within the City of Savannah, an additional application must be submitted to the Savannah Historic Preservation Office at the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC). For additional information, contact the Historic Preservation Office at (912) 651-1457.

NOTE: A building permit is required to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, remove or demolish any building, structure or part thereof. Examples of work that require building permits include:

- **All new construction work**
- **All alterations to existing construction**
- **All tenant improvements**
- **A change in use**
- **New signage**

A business tax certificate will not be issued until construction is complete, the work has been inspected by the City, and a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) is obtained. The Business Approval Coordinator can assist you with the building permit process.

Before You Sign

Prior to leasing, purchasing, or otherwise committing to a property you are **STRONGLY ADVISED** to confirm that the zoning and physical layout of the building and site are appropriate for the business use intended and will comply with the City of Savannah's Zoning Ordinance. This includes having a clear understanding of any code restrictions, limitations or architectural guidelines that may impact your operation and any building and site modifications that may be necessary to open your business.

The City's Zoning Ordinance permits certain types of businesses in specific areas of the City. The City's Business Approval Coordinator will assist you in determining whether a specific location is appropriately zoned for your type business.

The Business Approval Coordinator will also assist you in determining whether your situation is a change of use or occupancy that requires building and life safety code compliance, and whether a building permit is needed.

CONTACTS

For assistance with Business Location Approvals or permits, contact:

Aislee Jackson, MBA, Business Approval Coordinator
businesslocationapprovals@savannahga.gov
Tel: (912) 644-7709 FAX: (912) 651-6543

For additional assistance contact:

Development Services Liaison
Tel: (912) 644-7784 FAX: (912)651-6543

The City of Savannah Economic Development Department supports and promotes new and existing businesses in the community. Contact the Business Services Liaison at (912) 651-3653 ext.1918 for more information.